

our future. Our constituents deserve no less.

**TEXAS TECH PEACE OFFICER
FLOYD EAST, JR.**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Officer Floyd East, Jr., of the Texas Tech Police Department recently responded to a routine student welfare check at the dormitory. Callers reported a 19-year-old individual named Hollis Daniels, who was acting erratically and potentially had a weapon.

So Officer East went to Daniel's dorm room, and he discovered drugs and drug paraphernalia. Hollis, the defendant, was arrested and taken to the station for a standard debriefing.

But that is when the intake procedure at the police station went haywire. The defendant was not adequately searched before booking. Suddenly, the dastardly criminal whipped out a gun and fired pointblank into 48-year-old Officer East's head, instantly killing him. This is a photograph of Officer East. Yet another peace officer, another guardian of the thin blue line, murdered for no reason.

The suspect then fled, going on the lam, taking Officer East's body cam with him. The university went on lockdown, anxiously waiting for the killer to be found. Sure enough, thanks to the quick actions of the Texas Tech police force, the outlaw was located on campus and apprehended again.

Officer East was an El Paso, Texas, native. He is survived by his wife, Carmen, and two daughters, Anna and Monica. The funeral was a solemn remembrance wrapped up with the release of over 1,000 black and blue balloons, which flooded the west Texas blue sky, all in Officer East's memory.

Peace officers from all over Texas, and even other States, showed up for the funeral. As the body passed the Army National Guard Armory, officers and military stood at attention and saluted Officer East's body.

Officer Floyd East began his career with the Texas Tech Police Department on December 1, 2014. He started as a security guard at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso, Texas.

While working as a security guard, he went on to school at El Paso Community College Law Enforcement Academy to obtain his basic peace officer license to be a peace officer in the State of Texas.

Court documents show that the defendant, when he was arrested, concealed a weapon in his pants; and when Officer East's back was turned, the coward drew the weapon and murdered Officer East. The weapon that he had was stolen.

The defendant is charged with capital murder, and a \$5 million bond is set. May Texas justice occur.

Mr. Speaker, our men and women in blue voluntarily do everything they

can to help protect and serve our communities, especially at our colleges and universities. For these remarkable men and women, their safety, like all peace officers, is never guaranteed. While the badge and the uniform represent safety for citizens, for some reason, in our society it becomes a target for other people, like this defendant.

Officer East worked with university students, helping protect young Texans eager to learn on their university campus. He was senselessly killed. There is never an answer for murder, except to hold the person who did the murder accountable.

The defendant's friends quickly jumped to the defendant's defense online, claiming Daniels was not a monster. Mr. Speaker, college students do make mistakes. A mistake is like missing class and sleeping in. Mistakes are not murdering people.

The defendant is totally responsible for his own actions. He can't blame the drugs, he can't blame the fact that he was young, or he can't blame the fact that he was not thinking right.

Mr. Speaker, I was a judge in Texas for 22 years and heard cases like the murder of Officer East. People are responsible for what they do. In our society, we cannot have this feeling that people are not responsible and that something else calls them to do things. People are totally responsible for the choices that they make.

I have heard all of the excuses. I have heard: "Oh, I was too young." "Oh, I was too old." "I was on drugs." "I was affluent." "I wasn't affluent." I have heard all of the excuses.

There is no excuse. People, like this defendant, are responsible for their actions.

Officers like East are a cut above the rest of us, and they protect us from harm's way and they protect us from evildoers. He is of a rare breed, he is the Texas breed of law officers that sacrifice for the rest of us.

Taps have been played for Officer East. He has been laid to rest. We pray for his family, friends, and those officers in west Texas and Texas Tech University.

And that is just the way it is.

CALIFORNIA FIRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, the worst fire in the history of California has devastated nearly 300,000 acres, destroyed some 7,000 homes, caused billions of dollars in damage, burned to the ground many businesses, and, most sadly, taken the lives of 42 people; and that number may, in fact, rise.

This fire was like no other, propelled by winds that reached speeds of over 70 miles an hour. It moved so fast, burning at times 200 feet per second—that is three football fields every 30 seconds—

that people had little time to escape their burning homes.

People fled with only their night clothes—no time to grab even their medication, important papers, or personal belongings. Thousands of families were displaced and will have to find housing, rebuild their homes and businesses, and rebuild their lives.

Over 100,000 people were evacuated during the late hours of the first night of this monster firestorm. Many of you saw the news coverage play out on your television. The most covered area in the news is an area in Santa Rosa called Coffey Park. This is it. There alone, some 1,300 homes were burned to the ground. This area is on the far western side of the fire-devastated area, a county away from where it started.

The winds were so high that they pushed the blaze across eight lanes of freeway and over two frontage roads to destroy the homes and the lives of these 1,300 families. The winds were so high that cars were not only burned beyond recognition, but they were flipped over. There is a metal garage door that remains stuck about 35 feet off the ground in the remains of a burned-out pine tree.

Leader MCCARTHY was with me in Coffey Park and saw firsthand the devastation. I want to thank the leader for his commitment to work with us to help our communities and the many people so devastated by this unprecedented disaster. I thank also the 11,000 firefighters, the many law enforcement, and National Guard that put their life on the line to stop the raging inferno and protect the lives of the people of my district and the other fire-threatened areas of California. Some of those first responders lost their own homes, but worked 24/7 to help others.

The response was awesome and truly appreciated. Mutual aid came from every county in California, States across our great country, Federal agencies, and from other countries. The actions of civilian heroes and heroines saved an untold number of lives and continue to make life tolerable to those affected by this fire disaster.

The fallout from the disaster will be felt for years, if not decades. You just can't rebuild 7,000 homes and neighborhoods overnight.

The heartbeat of our community—doctors, nurses, workers, teachers, CEOs, and small business owners—were burned out and must start over. My colleagues and I appreciate all of their words of comfort and offers to help. The people hurt by this monster fire will need all of our help. As we move forward, we have to work together to address this devastation that has befallen the people of my district and other parts of northern California.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have spent a lot of time with my friend, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, over the past week because our districts neighbor each other. While the worst of this